



The Bell County Bobcats are pictured on the floor at Wake Forrest University, in Winston Salem. The Bobcats were there for three days. They came home with a varsity and JV record of 13 wins and only two losses.

Impressive showing for Bell County

The Bell Bobcat basketball team traveled to Winston Salem, North Carolina. The home of the Wake Forrest Demon Deacon's for a three-day team camp.

The camp had some of the best teams in the Eastern and Southern part of the United States. The Bobcats put together a string of performances that had multiple camp officials all asking the same question. "Where is Bell County?"

On day-one the Cats played Cardinal Gibbons High School from Fort Lauderdale, FL. Bell County started strong and finished strong. At the end of the game the scoreboard showed Bell County 61, Cardinal Gibbons 50.

Later that same day at 6pm. Bell played George Marshall High School from Fairfax, VA. The Cat's once again played well and won the game 46-35. Same day now 9pm, Bell County rolled in to Reynolds High School to play Oakton High School from Vienna, VA. This game proved to be a test early, but by the final horn Bell sealed the victory with great play down the stretch, winning by the score 67-59.

Bell's next game was on Friday at 1pm, against Northern Guilford High School from Greensboro, North Carolina. After a good night's sleep and a couple of meals the Cat's were rejuvenated and it showed, Bell County 51, Northern Guilford 31. The evening session paired the Cat's against a team from Central Pennsylvania. Bell County trailed early 18-11. After a couple of adjustments by coach Brad Sizemore, the Cat's stormed

back and won big 57-37.

Now, moving on to Saturday 8am, the Cat's completely dominated a team from Woodstock, VA. Central High School, final score 49-18.

The final game of team camp for Bell County certainly did not disappoint. It paired Bell County against Tennessee powerhouse 4-A Dobyn's Bennett.

Bell trailed at the end of each of the first three quarters. The Cat's were down by as many as 12 points, but there was no quit in this team. Actually Bell County turned up the heat while digging deep and chipped away at the Dobyn's Bennett lead and not only caught them but with 1:54 seconds to play in the game took a one point lead. This lead would bounce back and forth several times.

Big shots were made by numerous Cat's, a tip in by Cayden Huff, a three-pointer by Jaxon Thomas, a three-pointer by Blake Burnett, a steal and lay-up by Kaleb Cornett. Ethan Buell muscled his way to retrieve his own miss and power it back in.

Bell County doing what it needed to do to stay within striking distance and give it's self a chance to win the game, after free-throws by Dobyn's Bennett put them up by two points with less than 20 seconds to play on the clock. After a timeout Bell County put the ball in play and worked the clock down.

The ball found it's way to Freshman to be Braxton Ferguson with five seconds showing on the clock and it ticking down, Ferguson released a three-pointer from a foot behind

the college three point line as a defender rushed toward him to try and alter the shot. This attempt was no good, the ball was released cleanly it sailed through the air and found the bottom of the net giving Bell County a one point lead at the 3.2 second mark on the scoreboard.

The drama was not over. The ball was quickly unbounded by Dobyn's Bennett and with a pass ahead to the right side about 30-feet from the goal a catch and release toward the goal also found the inside of the goal that toss was ruled good! In dramatic fashion, Bell County 59, Dobyn's Bennett 60.

The Cat's rolled in to Bell County, Kentucky back from Wake Forrest University with a ton of steam. The Cat's Varsity and JV combined recored at camp was 13 win and just two losses. Bell's varsity team is now sporting a team summer record of 19 wins and against only four losses. The four losses are a combined total of nine points.

The Cat's top five players are all averaging double digits. Blake Burnett and Ethan Buell each are averaging 20 Points. Cayden Huff is averaging 10 Rebounds. Jaxon Thomas is at 14 Points, and Braxton Ferguson is at 10 points per game. Kaleb Cornett is at four points and two rebounds and Jacob Grubbs is at one point and two rebounds per game. These are all impressive numbers so far this summer for the Bobcats. Already sporting a 19 win summer ball record and an impressive win over state power Fredrick Douglas High School, the Cat's look to add more wins to that column with eight game still to play.

13th Region Media; 2026 early outlook for baseball

Bell County takes the No. 3 spot

By Les Dixon
13th Region Media Group

1. Whitley County (27-7)
After going wire to wire this past season as the region's top ranked team, the Colonels saw their season come to an end against Corbin in the region title game for the second straight season.

Next spring, I expect Whitley County to once again be the team to beat due to who is returning, and the addition of one of the top players in the region.

The Colonels already possess one of the best, if not the best, pitching staffs in the region and state, and now it has gotten even stronger with the addition of former Barbourville Tiger Luke Hillard, who has enrolled at Whitley County.

Hillard, who will be a junior, led the Tigers with a .521 batting average, three home runs, 37 hits, 34 RBI, and 30 runs scored while going 4-3 with a 3.13 ERA and 70 strikeouts in 40 innings pitched.

He joins a staff that possesses junior

Christian Wilson (8-1, 0.98 ERA, 39 Ks), senior EJ Allen (6-2, 2 saves, 1.22 ERA, 38 Ks), freshman Kip Allen (3-4, 1 save, 3.09 ERA, 43 Ks, Trey Walton (2-0, 1 save, 1.42 ERA, 26 Ks), Eli Powers (4-0, 1.14 ERA, 25 Ks), Clint Partin (3-0, 0.53 ERA, 11 Ks), and Caleb Cureton (1-0, 0.00 ERA, 2 Ks). Hitting wise, the Colonels will be strong as well.

Dee Parker will return for his senior campaign along with his team-best .396 batting average, and 23 stolen bases. EJ Allen batted .384 with three home runs, 38 hits, 22 RBI, 20 stolen bases and 38 runs scored. Henry Bowling, Ty Petrey, Spencer Bargo, Caden Mountjoy, Landon Rose and Kaden Powers will also return, too.

2. Corbin (20-18)
The Redhounds lose a lot of talent, but the cupboard is far from bare for coach Cody Philpot.

Granted graduating the likes of Mr. Baseball Kade Elam, Noah Cima, Cruz Cima, Lucas Tarvin, Will Freeman, Cooper McCauley, and JT Gentry is tough for any program to

overcome.

Cam Estep returns to the mix along with his .378 batting average, 37 hits, 37 runs scored and 31 stolen bases along with Trey Person (35 hits, 23 RBI, 27 runs scored), Levi Brock (11 runs, 11 hits, seven RBI), Clay Botner (32 hits, 22 RBI, 20 runs scored), Jaden Broughton (29 hits, 23 RBI, 21 runs scored), Ethan Abner (12 hits, six RBI, three runs scored), Dallas Merida (five hits, 22 runs, two RBI), and Kaiden Freeman (two hits, three RBI, one run scored).

Hunter Todd will return on the mound, possessing a 2-4 mark this past season along with Botner (0.98 ERA), Abner (3-3), and Broughton.

3. Clay County (15-11)
The loss of Ethan Jackson will hurt, but look for Jason Smith's Tigers to be in the thick of things next spring.

Soon to be senior Talan Marcum (.342, 5 home runs, 35 hits, 31 RBI, 40 runs scored; 5-2, 1.91 ERA, 23 Ks) returns along with Jonathan Smith (2-3, 3.13 ERA), Aidan Lovett (21 hits, 12 RBI, 24 runs scored), Brody

Hooker (19 hits, 20 RBI, eight runs scored), Aidan Roberts (14 hits, 16 RBI, 27 runs scored), Aiden Wagers (12 hits, 12 RBI, 10 runs scored), Connor Gilbert (13 hits, four RBI, 21 runs scored), and Mason Roark (nine hits, eight RBI, 13 runs scored).

4. Bell County (15-13)
The Bobcats will be stacked with talent, returning three of its four top hitters along with all of their pitching staff from last season.

Leading hitter Cooper Brock (.432, one home run, 35 hits, 20 RBI, 31 runs scored) returns along with Joseph Brigman (.408, two home runs, 29 hits, 25 RBI, 18 runs scored), Blake Burnett (.382, 29 hits, eight RBI, 27 runs scored), Brayden Carroll (.254), Holden Clark (.246), Ty Mays, Hunter Fuson, Ayden Smith, and Alex Creech.

Burnett posted a 5-3 mark on the mound last season while garnering a 0.77 ERA. Bringmon was 4-1 with one save and a 0.64 ERA, Brock recorded a win while Carroll was 2-2.



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